

The Maryland Yellowthroat

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President's Corner by Maureen F. Harvey

Penny Pinching

Efforts have been made in the past couple of years – especially under Past President Mark Johnson and Treasurer Dave Webb – to question and cut MOS expenses, where prudent, to keep MOS financially lean. These efforts resulted in reduced utility costs (e.g., lower phone rate was requested and granted), elimination of an under-used online list service, relocating the storage locker to a different facility (\$1200 saved the first year), and some other smaller things that escape my memory for now. These frugal moves enabled MOS to continue with normal activities and publications without increasing membership dues, despite a market downturn that reduced our investment earnings. I remind you of this so you'll understand MOS is very careful with its assets. That leads to the next topic.

Pocket Change

When I spoke of money matters in the last issue, I didn't mention pocket change. Well, could that mean the coins returned after paying for something? Sure, but what has that got to do with MOS? Birders as a lot have been called cheap; the hobby itself doesn't cost a lot once you've got your field guide and good binoculars (and spotting scope and camera and...oh, well, it doesn't *have* to cost a lot). We don't dig into our pockets very often to support the organizations that support our passion -- why is that?

It's humbling to realize that MOS receives donations annually from non-members through workplace giving campaigns. My MOS volunteer helpers and I had engaging conversations with dozens of people about the good works of MOS during the fall Maryland Charity Campaigns in Baltimore and Annapolis. These non-members give because they like what they hear or read in the campaign materials. Gee, complete strangers...why not our members, too? Would you consider making a donation to MOS beyond your annual membership dues? Saving your pocket change for a few months would be an easy way to do this.

Why do I ask for additional funds from our members? Additional dollars would enable expansion of MOS's public outreach by way of special programs, conservation projects, youth activities, additional scholarships, and sanctuary improvements – a short list of some of the good things MOS does. The MOS Treasurer or any Chapter Treasurer would be happy to accept additional contributions. Please think about it and see what you can do this year for MOS. Just a little pocket change from a bunch of members would make a big difference.

More Change to Make a Difference

Yes, folks, MOS must change to adapt to the changing birding world and world of birds. More change means more personal commitment to help achieve MOS's mission. Consider these words from the MOS mission statement: "encouraging the protection and conservation of bird life and natural resources that support bird life" and "working in cooperation with other organizations, as appropriate, to carry out some or all of the above activities." Following up on the October 26, 2013 workshop, facilitator Colin Rees developed an action matrix with specific tasks for workshop attendees to accomplish. One of the tasks assumed by Dave Curson (MD/DC Audubon) and me is to meet with MD DNR representatives Dave Brinker and Gwen Brewer to discuss bird-related projects that could use volunteer assistance. Why do they need volunteer help? MD DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service is sorely underfunded and understaffed considering their mission of protecting all of our State's wildlife. The staff will be especially stretched this year as they must drop other tasking to prepare a required 10-year update of the State's Wildlife Management Plan. This update is needed to apply for State Wildlife Grants administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The action matrix also has goals for each member and chapter that are highly achievable. More will be published and discussed with chapters as the matrix is fleshed out. Stay alert for opportunities for some real on-the-ground bird conservation and community outreach activities that you and your chapter can support.

Potential Change – Social Media?

What about Social Media? MOS doesn't currently take advantage of the potential outreach capability of Facebook, Twitter, etc. Are you Facebook literate? Would you consider heading a task force to look into developing a Facebook presence for MOS? Can you envision periodic notices to subscribers regarding scheduled MOS events? Please contact me (president@mdbirds.org) if you are interested or have ideas to contribute to this topic.

Erratum

In the article first announcing 2014 Annual Conference (Nov/Dec issue of *The Maryland Yellowthroat*) the telephone number for Mother Nature's Store should be 410-381-4351. An updated Conference Announcement is on p. 3.
Richard Donham

[**Editor's note:** The following article was submitted by BBC President, **Joan Cwi** and first appeared in the Winter Issue of *BBC Chip Notes*]

Mysterious Bird Sanctuary Discovered in Baltimore By Joan Cwi

As President of the Baltimore Bird Club, inquiries often come to me for answers, actions or resolutions. A recent query really caught my attention. It came from Shirl Bryon of the Loch Raven Improvement Association. She wanted to know if we knew anything about a bird sanctuary monument located near Mt. Pleasant golf course. My curiosity was piqued, so I agreed to meet her there to see for myself.

Shirl met me near the Yorkwood Elementary School and we walked to Hillen Road and turned left along the new chain link fence separating the sidewalk from the woods to the west. The woods were dense, vine covered, and full of fallen limbs and trees. A few young boys could be heard playing further down the street. And there it was, behind the fence, close to the sidewalk across the stream, partially hidden from view. It is a large, rough-hewn rock bearing an aged bronze plaque with curling oak leaves and a perched bird that reads:

THIS
BIRD SANCTUARY
IS DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF
AUGUSTINE J. RYAN
PARK COMMISSIONER
DIED JUNE 28, 1927
AS A MAN HE SERVED HIS GOD
FAITHFULLY, LOVED NATURE IN
HER MANIFOLD EXPRESSIONS,
AND CHERISHED HIS FRIENDS
WITH UNDYING DEVOTION
ERECTED BY THE BOARD
OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

I'm a historian by training, and my latent investigatory skill sets tingled. First step, I went online expecting nothing for someone who died 86 years ago. But I was wrong. There, on eBay, was Augustine J. Ryan's photograph for sale as part of *The Sun's* obituary collection. Both his name and date of death were written on the back. I checked Ancestry.com and found the 1920 census where he was listed as living on Baltimore Street with his parents (Irish immigrants) and brothers. Although all were in their fifties at that time, none of the brothers were married.

Then I tried the wonderful online service offered by Enoch Pratt where you can query *Sun* articles since 1837 and found a gold mine of information. The first was his obituary, dated June 29, 1927 titled "A.J. Ryan Dies Suddenly of Heart Disease." Obituaries were evidently very chatty back then, as this long article describes how he went to work feeling fine, then got sick, went home, and died that evening. It also speculates that an earlier tooth infection might be the cause! Gus, as he was called, made his money in coal

and was a philanthropist, donating time and money to politics and various causes including the arts. At the time of his death he was Baltimore Park Commissioner, a job he did *pro bono*. But this obituary did not explain the reference to a bird sanctuary in his name.

A second article a few days later was titled "Plans Bird Reserve as Ryan Memorial." It describes that the Park Board decided to establish a bird sanctuary as a memorial to the deceased to be known as the Augustine J. Ryan Bird Sanctuary. At that time it was debated whether it would be located in Herring Run



Augustine J. Ryan.

Park or in another park in Northeast Baltimore. The sanctuary would consist of "...ten or fifteen acres enclosed by a fence which neither cats, rats nor other animals would be able to scale. Inside the enclosure...there will be thickly matted honeysuckle and underbrush as a hiding place for birds"—an apt description of what can be seen today, including a chain link fence with no visible entrance that surrounds the park. The article goes on to quote William I Norris, president of the 1927 Park Board, as saying "I never knew a man who was more deeply interested in birds than was Mr. Ryan. From the time he became a member of the Park Board he was anxious that something be done for the birds. He was the prime mover in the erection of bird boxes in Druid Hill Park and in the contest among school children for the making of the boxes."

Finally, in June 1932, twelve acres of wired-in woodland at Mount Pleasant Park on Hillen Road, were dedicated as a bird sanctuary in memory of Mr. Ryan. And thanks to Shirl Bryon, once more we get to honor this noble gentleman for his part in Baltimore's birding history and conservation.

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View of bronze plaque in Augustine J. Ryan Bird Sanctuary.

2014 MOS Conference

May 16 – 18

Holiday Inn Solomons Conference Center
Solomons, MD

The Annual Conference is fast approaching. You should receive your registration brochure sometime in January or certainly by February. We've been busy getting ready and it's shaping up to be an interesting, exciting, and, of course, fun conference.

Bill Hubick and Jim Brighton are currently setting up their biodiversity field trips. Hopefully, there will be four to six choices. As always, Bob Ringler will be doing his butterfly field trip.

Tyler Bell also has been working on the Conference field trips. He has been putting together a schedule and looking for trip leaders and local leaders. Considering the diversity of area and wonderful birding sites, field trip choices will be difficult to make.

Tyler (jtylerbell@yahoo.com) is still looking for volunteers. If you are willing to lead a field trip or would like to be a local guide, contact him. Don't know the area but would like to lead a trip? Not a problem. Tyler will provide you with a local guide.

Of course there will be night trips. One of the night trips which Bill Hubick is working on is to offer is a blacklighting session for people to come see and photograph moths. Last year we used a system devised by Dave Webb for night trip signups. That will be continued this year. That means everyone will have to signup for the night trips in advance. All the names are put into Dave's computer lottery system and random choices will be made for each night trip. This system worked quite well last year; thanks, Dave!

I have good news! Barbara Johnson, President of our Anne Arundel Bird Club, has stepped up and graciously offered to run the Silent Auction and Raffle this year. There are always interesting items available; you never know what you will find. So don't forget to stop by the Silent Auction at the conference; check out the Raffle

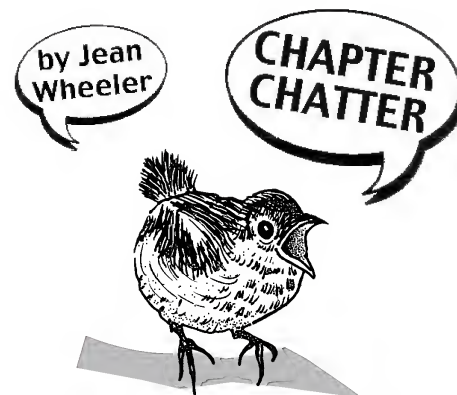
items while there and buy a raffle ticket! The recipient of the Silent Auction and Raffle this year is the Mattawoman Watershed Society. Volunteer help is always needed. Please contact Barbara Johnson, (barbarajohnson222@gmail.com) if you would like to help. Also remember that donations are always welcome.

Maryanne Dolan has put together another fantastic workshop for us. This year Sean McCandless will be giving a raptor ID workshop. This is our first raptor workshop in over ten years. Attend and increase your ID skills. As always, you will sign up in advance for the workshop when you fill out your registration form. The workshop will be held Friday afternoon and attendance is limited. There will not be a teaching field trip to follow as May is not the ideal time for raptors. Sean will be leading one of the regular field trips. If you are lucky enough to be on his trip, he will surely be pointing out any raptors seen and giving ID tips.

Contact me with any questions. Hope to see you at our Solomons Conference!

Janet Shields

Conference Chair
410-901-1039
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ALLEGANY & GARRETT COUNTIES' BIRD CLUB

On Saturday, November 2, 2014, at the annual Club banquet, the Club honored *Charlotte Folk*, who retired as Treasurer after 53 years of Service. She was given a Valued Service Award, as well as a pin. Four past-Presidents (*Roy Brown, Chuck Hager, Ray Kiddy, and J.B. Churchill*) spoke of all that Charlotte has done for the Club, and Carey Run as well. *Barbara Johnson*, a long-time member and native of Frostburg also spoke of Charlotte's qualities and kindnesses over the years. Over 30 members attended the banquet, and Charlotte was given a warm round of applause from all. Thank you, *Charlotte Folk*, for your years of service to the Allegany & Garrett Counties' Bird Club, and MOS. Your dedication and years of service are MOST appreciated!

Young Birder Award

Aaron Graham, Oakland, was recognized with a

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Young Birder award, by the Allegany & Garrett Counties' Bird Club for his interest, commitment, and skill in the study of birds. The presentation was made at the Club's recent meeting at Frostburg State University. Graham has always been interested in nature and focused his attention on birds when in the fifth grade at Crellin Elementary School. He has since compiled a county bird list of 130 species, and a life list of more than 200, recording his sightings on eBird. Graham credits his parents, Donna & Cliff Graham, and his grandparents, for encouraging his interest, and taking him out to find new species. He hopes for a career in ornithology or other natural sciences.

The speaker for the evening was Will Hershberger, and Will donated an autographed copy of his book and CD "The Songs of Insects" to the award! *Mary Huebner*

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB

Each spring and fall during migration, the Baltimore Bird Club holds a Baltimore area field trip called "Chimney Swifts at Dusk." This popular event attracts as many as 40 people an evening despite the fact that the swifts continually change their destination chimneys. Results have ranged from a paltry handful one cold, rainy night to over 7,000 entering a single chimney. Fortunately, this past fall was rich with swifts! Large numbers were reported entering several chimneys from late August thru early October. We hosted BBC's Chimney Swifts at Dusk the evening of September 22nd at two places in central and eastern Baltimore—Roland Park Country School and St. Michael's Archangel Church School. Swift counts that night were 502 and 2610 respectively (see photo). Other places swifts were seen in abundance were Kernan Hospital, Druid Hill Conservatory, The Crittenton Place in Hampden, Charles Village at Homewood Friends at 31st and Charles Streets, and Maryland Geological Survey building at 23rd and St. Paul Street. *Joan Cwi*



Chimney Swifts seen on Baltimore field trip.

HARFORD COUNTY

I had so much fun last year on my "Chile & Argentina Birds and Wine" trip, that I jumped at the chance to see Chile, from Tierra del Fuego in the South all the way to the North on the border with Peru, and from the Andes on the eastern border with Argentina to the West coast. I travelled again with Alvaro Jaramillo, the author of the field guide, *Birds of Chile*. The second guide was once again noted Chilean birder Ricardo Matus, whose study of the rare and endangered Ruddy-headed Goose is well known. This three-week-plus trip was vigorous because of the expanse of territory to be covered. The beauty of the country and the bird and animal life were well worth it. We visited a new King Penguin colony on Tierra del Fuego, and saw Magellanic and Humboldt Penguin on Chiloe Island. Patagonia and Torres del Paine National Park are simply breathtaking. The name means Blue Towers in a native language, not Spanish. These glacier carved spires are awesome. Over the course of the trip we observed over 90 Andean Condor. Six species of hummingbirds were spotted: Giant Hummingbird, Green-backed Firecrown, Andean Hillstar, Chilean Woodstar, Oasis Hummingbird, and Peruvian Sheartail. Of the eight species of tapaculo, the group saw six well and heard the other two. The Chucao Tapaculo, which was elusive on last year's trip, was seen and heard frequently. We once again trekked into the Yeso Valley for the special Diademed Sandpiper-Plover. Another bird with its own separate genus was the Magellanic Plover seen on Tierra del Fuego. We were fortunate to spot three separate South American Painted-Snipe, a very shy, hard to find rare bird. The trip ended in the North where we reached an elevation of over 15,000 feet. Three species of Flamingo, Giant Coot, and Puna Tinamou were just a few of the many species seen. Our lunch spot at that elevation was on a lake at the foot of a perfectly conical shaped volcano with snow dripping down its sides like icing on a cake. I spotted 258 species with 60 life birds. *Jean Wheeler*

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Club members *Gerry Hawkins, Martha Krieger, Helen Patton, Anne Cianni and Mike Bowen* attended the American Birding Association's fall "rally" held in San Diego, California, from the 12th to 16th October, with a two-day extension to the Salton Sea, 140 miles East of San Diego and 200 feet below sea level. Mike wrote: "The headquarters in San Diego was the very pleasant Bahia Resort, with superb views of Mission Bay and of Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds working the bottlebrush trees. Field trips visited a wide range of habitats in extreme Southwest California, affording good looks at species we Easterners seldom or never see, such as Wrentit, California Thrasher, California Gnatcatcher, Vaux's Swift, Nutmeg Mannikin, Townsend's Warbler, Cassin's, Western and Tropical Kingbirds, and Red-naped and Red-breasted Sapsuckers. A trip to the mountains yielded Pygmy Nuthatch and Mountain Chickadee, and a Saw-whet Owl being harassed by small passerines, which proved to be a county bird for leader Jon Dunn as well as a state bird for just about everybody. There were lots of shorebirds in the San Diego River a stone's throw from the resort, including Marbled Godwit, Whimbrel, Long-billed Dowitcher, Snowy Plover, Red Knot, and Long-billed Curlew. A pelagic voyage off Point Loma gave nice views of Shearwaters (Pink-footed and Black-vented),

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Black and Least Storm-petrels, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, a Sabine's Gull, Cassin's Auklets, a pair of Craveri's Murrelets, and – big surprise – a Short-eared Owl flying to the mainland from an offshore island. The highlights at the Salton Sea were numerous – perhaps the best were two Blue-footed Boobies flying in and perching on a rock in front of us and a very close and impressive adult Yellow-footed Gull. Most unexpected was a pair of Lesser Flamingos, definitely not “countable” birds, that had reportedly been released thirty years ago. A fan palm at the headquarters of the Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR hid a sleeping Barn Owl, photographed by just about everybody.

When queried by email about this trip, *Helen Patton* reported briefly from Taiwan “Actually Chris, I have two milestones to report for this year: I saw my 700th ABA bird, a Bell's Sparrow, during the ABA rally in San Diego. I saw my 4000th world bird, here in Taiwan, a Yellow Tit.”

Paul Pisano reports he returned from a 2 1/2 week vacation to Cambodia and Vietnam in early November that included birding opportunities in addition to opportunities to see ancient and recent historical sites (from Angkor Wat to the Killing Fields). Paul wrote: “The trip consisted of a few days in and around Siem Reap, a cruise down the Mekong River, a brief stay in Saigon, and then three days at the Cat Tien National Park, which is about 85 miles northeast of Saigon. In Siem Reap I was able to take a day trip to Prek Toal, which is a bird reserve on the huge Tonle Sap Lake. We had to ride in a boat to get to the reserve, where we were able to see Spot-billed Pelicans, Asian Openbills (a type of stork), and a huge colony of Oriental Darters and Great, Indian, and Little Cormorants, among the 50+ species that we saw that day. The birding was slow down the Mekong, but the trip to Cat Tien at the end of the trip made up for it. With the help of an expert local guide, we were able to see such local specialties as Germain's Peacock-Pheasant, Green Peafowl, Siamese Fireback and Orange-necked Partridge. There were many other exotic birds, with names such as minivet, iora, tit-babbler and spiderhunter, but the passerine highlight had to be the Bar-bellied Pitta - a ground-dwelling bird of brilliant greens, blues, yellows and blacks that's found in the darkest parts of the forest. Thankfully the ground leeches were in very low numbers and not a problem, but even the biggest spiderhunter would have been unable to take down the giant Huntsman Spider that tried to get into our cabin (think of a spider as big as a grown man's hand). It would have been able to turn the doorknob if given the chance.”

“Blue and Gold Macaws and Toco Toucans flying over head. What a treat!” writes *Stephanie Lovell* of the birds seen on a family visit to Brasilia in October. “We were about three hours north of the city at a Posada exploring the Alto Paraíso de Goiás and its many waterfalls when these birds flew into view. Greater Rheas in the fields by the roads; a Red-legged Seirema picking at grit in a yard; a Moscow Duck pair in a small road-side pond; lots of different parrots flying too fast to ID; and the ubiquitous southern hemisphere bird, the Kiskadee, everywhere. The most exciting part of my stay was the opportunity to see the falls at Foz de Iguaçu. On the border with Argentina we visited both sides of the falls which are truly fantastic. On the Argentinean side a Blue-naped Chlorophonia flew into a tree just as I was starting the walk on top of the falls, what a gorgeous bird! Visits to nearby parks in Brasilia were very productive; Fork-tailed Flycatcher,

horneros with their round mud nests; lots and lots of Southern Lapwings, Rufus-bellied Thrush, Saffron Finch, and a wonderful Guiraca Cuckoo with its punk hairdo; a family of four Blond-crested Woodpeckers at a hot spring; a Blue-crowned Motmot was quietly sitting on a branch there watching us; and one of my favorites, the Plush-crested Jay. It was interesting to see the many species here that were also in the Central American countries that I've visited such as the Southern Lapwing and the Kiskadee. The temperatures are similar and the flora and fauna are too. Cool nights and very hot afternoons are the norm. The twenty degree drop upon returning home was a challenge.”

Helen Patton and *Stephanie Lovell* went north in September to participate in Audubon's Hog Island program *Living on the Wind: Fall Migration and Monhegan Island*. Led by Scott Weidensaul, with the help of Tom Johnson, Ben Clock and Peter Vickery, they enjoyed four days of intense birding. Stephanie wrote: “The trip to Monhegan Island was special because a cold front had come in the night before and so we were treated to twenty species of warbler and a young Yellow crowned Night Heron all in one afternoon. Merlins were everywhere; Waxwings had to be on their guard! The meals were excellent and ample, with a lobster feast at the end.” A full description of their adventures can be found in Trip Reports in the club's newsletter *The Chat* (<http://www.montgomerybirdclub.org>). *Chris Wright*

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Jane Kostenko and *Tyler Bell* worked the American Birding Associations Birding Rally in San Diego, California in October. The Montgomery Chapter of MOS was well represented there as well. Jane and Tyler had birded Southern and Central California several times before but still managed to pick up a handful of life birds in between conference duties. Nutmeg Mannikin, recently added to the ABA Checklist, could be found just a few miles from the conference hotel. Least Storm-Petrel required a bit more field work including a pelagic trip to 30-mile Bank aptly named for its distance from shore. Blue-footed Boobies, which had recently surged into southern California and Arizona in unprecedented numbers, were found on an inland reservoir.

The event was their 26th with ABA since their first way back in 1994! *Tyler Bell*

WASHINGTON COUNTY

The City of Hagerstown is encouraging its citizens to learn about birding through the placement of signs in two City parks. The signage resulted from interactions between Washington County Bird Club (WCBC) members and Parks and Recreation staff, when a proposed park renovation project threatened a Green Heron nesting site. The staff was made aware that construction could not threaten an active nest. City staff responded with interest, scrapped the changes to the nesting site, and asked for help to implement an idea for bird signage at the two locations. Both sites were monitored by WCBC members *Anna Hutzell* and *Melanie Fouche* and a species list was compiled. Each sign was limited to 24 species, and the birds most likely to be encountered by the casual observer were chosen for inclusion. (An ongoing list

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will most likely be available on the park website). The signs were then designed and installed by the city.

On November 19th, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at Mills Park, deemed one of the City's more natural parks, and the first to receive the City-created signs. At the ceremony, WCBC Secretary *Anna Hutzell* complimented the city for enhancing the park's already diverse habitat with a wetland area, running water, mature trees, an open grassy area edged with native plants, and dense shrubbery, all to attract birdlife. In the future, WCBC members will be conducting walks for City residents there, and at other locations, managed through the Hagerstown Parks and Recreation Department. *Linda Field*



One of the new bird ID signs surrounded by WCBC members and Hagerstown officials (left to right): *Shirley Ford, Doug Hutzell, Anna Hutzell, Mayor Gysberts, Judy Lilga, City Councilman Martin Brubaker.*

MOS Instrumental in Saving Sideling Hill

By Kurt Schwarz, Chairman
MOS Conservation Committee

MOS united with local residents in Washington County to successfully oppose off-road vehicle (ORV) trails on Sideling Hill. The Conservation Committee learned in September that Maryland's DNR had proposed two off-road vehicle trail systems for Sideling Hill in Washington County. Local residents had sought our aid in halting these plans. Consequently, the Committee directed letters to the Governor, the Secretary for Natural Resources, the Public Lands Supervisor, and the Director of the Wildlife and Heritage Service. We noted that these trails would infringe on Sideling Hill Wildlife Management Area and Woodmont Natural Resources Management Area, and would be contrary to the stated mission for those areas to protect the wildlife habitat and the water quality of Sideling Hill Creek. We also noted the scenic viewshed would be marred by such trails, and that ORV usage was exclusive of other land uses, such as wildlife observation and the quiet enjoyment of the outdoors. Conservation Chair Kurt Schwarz and Committee member George Alderson attended a public meeting in Hancock, with George commenting on behalf

of the Sierra Club, while Kurt presented MOS' testimony. The Friends and Family of Sideling Hill packed the hall with local residents, who appeared unanimous in opposing the ORV trails. The Hancock Chamber of Commerce, the Farm Bureau, the Hancock Town Council, and the Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitor's Bureau all joined in opposition. While DNR's communications with the affected communities left much to be desired, they apparently heeded the opposition and announced on October 9 that Sideling Hill ORV trails were being dropped (<http://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2013/10/09/dnr-announces-results-of-off-road-vehicle-trail-review-process/>). It reflects badly on DNR that they were even willing to consider opening a state wildlife management area to ORVs, in clear violation of the stated mandates for those management areas. We will have to remain vigilant to keep Maryland's WMAs dedicated to conservation of wildlife and its habitat.



Sideling Hill trail.



Birds of Note – by Les Roslund

After a delightful period of visits by the migrating warblers of the fall, shifting gears was a bit hard until cooler temperatures started bringing in some of the exciting other migrants. One of the most exciting of the fall visitors was a 'probable' LAZULI BUNTING that was seen and even photographed by Mikey Lutmerding at Point Lookout State Park, St. Mary's County, on October 14th. Unlike his cousin the PAINTED BUNTING that loitered in our state for much of the summer, this LAZULI BUNTING did not stay around long enough for others to enjoy. It probably deserves merely the status of vagrant, but it is nice to hear of one at least pausing briefly in Maryland. Prior to this visit there were only two accepted reports of LAZULI BUNTING our state.

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Back on September 29th a field in Hyde's Road Park, Baltimore County, caught the attention of Matt Hafner of Harford County who is always on the lookout for promising habitat. This site lived up to expectation by yielding a beautiful LECONTE'S SPARROW and also a CLAY-COLORED SPARROW. Word was quickly spread, and by the end of the day several other birders had relocated these two and added sightings of a NELSON'S SPARROW. The LECONTE'S continued to be seen through October 5th, and while people were paying careful attention to this field the list of sparrow species seen or heard continued to grow. The additions included VESPER, SAVANNAH, LINCOLN'S and SONG SPARROWS. BOBOLINKS and MEADOWLARKS were also found to be using this fine habitat. Birder interest was so high that the property managers agreed to delay the scheduled mowing of the field in order to let the migrating sparrows have time to pass through.

On October 19th Point Lookout State Park came through again by hosting another great visitor from the far west -- a PACIFIC LOON. This bird stayed around a little longer than the LAZULI BUNTING mentioned above. It was first reported by Mikey Lutmerding (who else?) and he, with the help of his wife Joanna got the word out so fast that by end of the day quite a few local birders had managed to relocate and enjoy the bird. Excellent photos were attained on the 19th and on the 20th, even though the bird moved around quite a bit. It was first seen on the Potomac River side of the park. Later it was on the Chesapeake Bay, and by the morning of the 21st it was back on the river. One of Mikey's photos gave a great view of the bird in a side profile fly-by that was close enough to a COMMON LOON to vividly show the substantial size difference while also allowing easy field mark comparisons. On the afternoon of the 21st the PACIFIC LOON gradually drifted out into the Bay far from the shore line until it was lost from view. It was not seen again.

Somehow, October 19th was an exceptionally good day for the birds and the birders of our region, for several avid birders of the District of Columbia were rewarded that day with great sightings of a HENSLOW'S SPARROW in Kenilworth Park. Hugh McGuinness of DC discovered and promptly reported the bird in mid-morning of the 19th. By noon Wayne Baumgartner was there and readily relocated the bird with the help of markers that Hugh had left. Wayne attained great photos of the bird. It had become calm and cooperative in the early afternoon. Several other local birders made it to the site by the end of the day and shared the joy. They were the lucky ones, because next day the bird was gone. This neat little bird was just passing through, and by the 20th it had apparently moved on. Interestingly enough, the only previous report of a HENSLOW'S SPARROW in DC was for a sighting from Kenilworth Park on October 21, 2012. That report is currently under DC Records Committee review.

In late summer and fall it is not unusual for various pelagic species to be sighted far off shore from beaches of Ocean City or Assateague Island. But birders continue to be optimists and continue to make visits to the shore in hopes of close-up views. One of the optimists this season was Fred Shaffer of Crofton, Anne Arundel County, and on October 30th he was rewarded with

nice close-up views of a PARASITIC JAEGER at Ocean City Inlet. This juvenile bird was having a great time flying low and fast over the water as it chased a small group of gulls and even took a swipe at a passing NORTHERN GANNET. The JAEGER stayed in view for two or three minutes before disappearing over the ocean to the south.

The Worcester County Rarity Roundup of November 8-10 brought reports of lots of pelagic species including JAEGERs. After that event several people used Nov 11 for a wrap-up day, in hopes of getting more great views of some of the species. One such person was Marcia Balestri of Ocean City, Worcester County, who returned to the Ocean City Inlet in the afternoon and was treated to delightful group of Gannets, terns and gulls flying quite close to the shore. Amongst them was a PARASITIC JAEGER harassing a ROYAL TERN while providing great viewing to the set of assembled birders. The birds were splendidly cooperative during the Rarity Roundup again this year.

On November 10th, following the Rarity Roundup, Leslie Starr and Joe Turner of Baltimore chose to drive past DeCoursey Bridge in Dorchester County to check for waterfowl reported by others at that site over the weekend. Their visit yielded a surprise viewing of three SANDHILL CRANES. Although the birds were quite distant, and wind conditions were severe, this talented photography team still managed to attain quite decent photos to document the sighting. Later they learned that two SANDHILL CRANES had been reported the previous day at Blackwater NWR which is quite close to DeCoursey Bridge.

SNOW BUNTINGS regularly winter on the dunes along the Atlantic Ocean shoreline, but they are an unusual bird in the Mid-shore region of Maryland. So it was a pleasant discovery for Harry Armistead of Royal Oak, Talbot County, when he came across three of them beside the Wildlife Drive of Blackwater NWR on November 7th. The sighting was promptly reported and the birds were relocated several times over the next few days. However SNOW BUNTINGS can hide quite well amongst large rocks like those bordering the Blackwater Wildlife Drive, so some birders missed them even though the birds had not left the part of the drive where they were originally found. As of November 19th two were still being found and the number had been as high as seven. The seven were seen on November 15th.

DICKSISSELS were few and far between in Maryland during the past summer, so it is pleasing to hear that a few have been visiting our region this fall. One of the most reliable visitors was a first-year female DICKCISSEL that on November 10th made its first visit to a feeder in the yard of Sean McCandless of Elkton, Cecil County. This bird looked so much like a HOUSE SPARROW that Sean did not initially give it much attention. But on the 11th he obtained photographs that caught the distinctive yellow markings of the head and breast. The bird liked the feeder offerings so much that it was still making regular visits as of November 18th.

One full week after the excitement of the Rarity Roundup another great bird turned up in Worcester County. This was a WESTERN

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Birds of Note continued from page 7

GREBE, and on November 17th it was found, photographed and reported by Frode Jacobsen of Windsor Mill, Frederick County. It was seen swimming out on the ocean from a viewing site reached from Shell Road in Assateague State Park. Frode's notes caught many distinguishing features that supported the bird's identification. The photographs provided strong additional confirmation. Unfortunately the bird did not stay around to be seen and enjoyed by other birders.

Maryland/DC Records Committee Status Report as of November 25, 2013

by Phil Davis
MD/DCRC Secretary

The MD/DCRC has reached the following record decisions since the last committee status report was published in *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. This report covers MD/DCRC review packages 153 through 154. MD/DCRC report numbers are in brackets. These records will be addressed in additional detail in a future issue of *Maryland Birdlife*.

More information on the MD/DCRC can be found on the committee's web pages at the following URL:
<http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html>

MD Records Accepted:

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, *Dendrocygna autumnalis* [MD/2013-027] Far Cry Farm Road, Lexington Park, Saint Mary's County
31-May-2013

Barnacle Goose, *Branta leucopsis* [MD/2012-204] Potomac River, Oxon Hill, Prince George's County
10-Feb-2002

Western Grebe, *Aechmophorus occidentalis* [MD/2012-196] Castaways Campground, Ocean City, Worcester County
19-Nov-2012 through 23-Nov-2012

Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/2012-026] McKee-Beshers WMA (Hughes Hollow), Poolesville, Montgomery County
28-Apr-2012

Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/2012-037] Big Monie Creek, Mount Vernon, Somerset County
10-May-2012

Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/2012-043] Dameron, Saint Mary's County
13-May-2012

Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/2012-197] Ocean City, Worcester County
25-Nov-2012

White-winged Dove, *Zenaida asiatica* [MD/2012-193] West Ocean City, Ocean City, Worcester County
15-Nov-2012

Loggerhead Shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* [MD/2012-198] Hagerstown, Washington County

30-Nov-2012 through 05-Dec-2012

Bewick's Wren, *Thryomanes bewickii* [MD/2007-083] Ocean City, Worcester County
27-Dec-1967

Black-throated Gray Warbler, *Setophaga nigrescens* [MD/2013-002] Silver Spring, Montgomery County
09-Jan-2013 through 23-Jan-2013

MD Records ID OK/?? Origin:

Callipepla species, *Callipepla* sp. [MD/2011-390, reported as "California Quail"] Olde Mill Court, Derwood, Montgomery County
04-Oct-2011, for about a week

MD Records Not Accepted:

Western Grebe, *Aechmophorus occidentalis* [MD/1997-646] Leitch Wharf, Prince Frederick, Calvert County
24-Nov-1961

Brown Booby, *Sula leucogaster* [MD/2011-389] Chesapeake Bay, Stevensville, Kent County
30-Sep-2011

Eurasian Collared-Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto* [MD/2011-166] Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely, Caroline County
15-Jun-2011

Fork-tailed Flycatcher, *Tyrannus savana* [MD/2012-092] Fort Meade, Anne Arundel County
19-Sep-2012

Townsend's Solitaire, *Myadestes townsendi* [MD/2013-015] USDA ARS West, Beltsville, Prince George's County
24-Feb-2013

Bohemian Waxwing, *Bombycilla garrulus* [MD/2011-192] Glen Burnie, Anne Arundel County
04-Mar-1950

Bohemian Waxwing, *Bombycilla garrulus* [MD/2012-186] LaVale, Allegany County
07-Nov-1972

Kirtland's Warbler, *Setophaga kirtlandii* [MD/2012-086] Edgewater, Anne Arundel County
02-Oct-1976

Kirtland's Warbler, *Setophaga kirtlandii* [MD/2012-102] Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin, Worcester County
03-Oct-2012

Black-throated Gray Warbler, *Setophaga nigrescens* [MD/2012-118] Annapolis, Anne Arundel County
16-Dec-1956

Bullock's Oriole, *Icterus bullockii* [MD/2004-130] Claiborne, Talbot County
03-Mar-1955 through 08-Mar-1955

DC Records Accepted:

Lark Sparrow, *Chondestes grammacus* [DC/2013-032] Oxon Cove
03-Sep-2013

Book Review: *The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors* by Richard Crossley, Jerry Liguori and Brian Sullivan. Princeton University Press/Crossley Books, 2013. 286 pp. List price \$29.95.

**by Michael Bowen
Montgomery Bird Club**

In the May/June issue of *The Maryland Yellowthroat* back in 2011, I reviewed Crossley's initial guide in this series ("*Eastern Birds*"), and found that book to be tremendously innovative but slightly flawed by what some local birders and I believed to be "muddy" renditions of the passerine plates. Many other reviewers unreservedly admired the book. Since then Crossley has won the Robert Ridgway Award of the American Birding Association, largely on the strength of the Eastern ID book and its freshly inventive approach and style.

I have no analogous quibbles about the second book in the series, reviewed here. Crossley's new raptor identification guide has two very important things going for it: First, the presentation of multiple bird images on a one- or two-page spread works exceptionally well for raptors, with the subjects superimposed by computer manipulation on a photographic background representing realistic and appropriate habitat. Second, Crossley has enlisted two other talented birder/writers to help him develop the text, which is considerably more extensive than in the Eastern Birds guide. The two are Jerry Liguori, whose own hawk guides coauthored with David Sibley and Pete Dunne garnered favorable reviews when they were published in 2005 and 2011, and Brian Sullivan, a West Coast birder with tons of field experience and one of the "gurus" behind the successful eBird project at Cornell. Liguori and Sullivan wrote most of the text and Crossley took all the photos (and there are thousands of them).

The plates in this new guide are, for the most part, nothing short of gorgeous. Raptors are shown soaring, perching, stooping, and generally behaving as they do when birders see them and try, often unsuccessfully, to identify them as to species. Of course, "gorgeous" isn't necessarily helpful when your aim is first and foremost to learn how to identify those beautiful hawks, eagles, kites, and falcons. Nevertheless, this is where the Crossley Raptor Guide excels – it's a teaching tool *par excellence*. Crossley presents each species one at a time, with multiple images of birds of various ages and sexes in a variety of aspects, followed up by a series of plates with multiple different species presented as a quiz challenge for the reader, with "right answers" at the back of the book. One spread shows 21 hawks at sunrise, so color is not a factor you can use to help with the individual identifications – they all look orange! Working through these quizzes was, for me, the most enjoyable, not to say humbling, aspect of the guide. Each individual species plate is accompanied by a relatively short but pithy text block on the same page. A more detailed set of texts for each species is to be found later in the guide, complete with range maps and information on distribution, flight style, size, shape, plumage and migration patterns. Page numbers are cross referenced, so that it is easy to read about each bird as you look at the photos.

So is this a field guide? Well, not really, because it is just too bulky to keep on one's person. But by all means keep it in the car, especially if you are planning to go to a hawk watch. Fundamentally, though, this is a book to study AT HOME and at length, before you ever go out in the field to look at raptors. I have, over the years, bought and (supposedly) studied most of the many books on raptor identification published in North America. This new effort by Crossley and his colleagues is, hands down, the cream of the crop.



Photo of a plate from the *The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors*.

MARYLAND and DC BIRDERS WANTED FOR AMAZON BIRDATHON ADVENTURE!

By Ross Geredien

Witness the spectacular diversity of bird species found in Peru in an incredible 12-day birding adventure all while supporting the conservation of biodiversity! The Amazon Conservation Association has agreed to host up to 12 participants from Maryland/DC for its third Birdathon. We will travel from the Andean cloud forests at 11,000 feet to the lush Amazonian lowlands at the base of the Andean foothills along the famed Manu Transect, while counting the number of bird species we see. The trip will be a fundraising event benefiting conservation efforts in the southeastern Peruvian Amazon adjacent to Manu National Park, which has the highest concentration of bird diversity in the world.

An experienced local guide will lead the group through this birdwatcher's paradise where up to 500 different species are possible. While staying at ACAs [Wayqecha Cloud Forest Biological Station](#), we may find Golden-headed Quetzals, Gray-breasted Mountain-toucans, Swallow-tailed Nightjars, or any of the 25 species of tanagers. At [Villa Carmen Biological Station](#), we may catch site of Hairy-crested Antbird, Rufous-capped Nunlet, Scarlet Hooded Barbet, or Amazonian Antpitta. We will also stop at various altitudes along the way, including the world-famous Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge.

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Amazon Birdathon continued from page 9

Each trip participant will seek sponsors to pledge an amount per bird seen or to make a donation to the event. All funds raised from the trip will support ACAs conservation efforts in the headwaters of the Amazon basin. By conserving these areas, ACA provides a space for local and migratory bird species to thrive. In 2012, team Wisconsin raised \$30,000. This year's trip will give Maryland a chance to represent our state's best birding and fundraising skills!

The [Amazon Conservation Association](#) is an alliance of Peruvian, Bolivian, and U.S. conservation organizations with a joint vision to protect the biological diversity of the Amazon basin. ACA is focused in the headwaters of the Amazon basin, where the rainforest meets the Andes, in southeastern Peru and northern Bolivia, one of the most biologically rich regions on Earth.

When: 12 Days during the second half of April, 2014. Specific dates TBD, between April 12 and 30.

Costs: approximately \$2,100 plus \$500 tax-deductible contribution, includes all meals and ground transport from Lima to Lima.

Accommodations: Comfortable biological stations, double rooms.

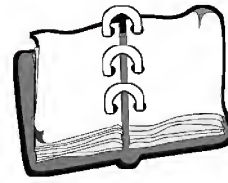
Possible Extension to Machu Picchu, Los Amigos Biological Station (remote river access only) or other Peru birding hotspots may be possible for an additional cost.

Contact: Ross Geredien (goodmigrations@yahoo.com) or 610-850-5035 for more information



Photo: Daniel Huamán

Trogons are among the many groups to be seen on the Amazon Birdathon.



MOS Calendar

Jan - Feb 2014

By Andy Martin

Wednesday, January 1

✿ **CHRISTMAS COUNT. Bowie, MD.** Compiler: David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212, mozurk@bellatlantic.net.

✿ **Baltimore.** Loch Raven. Start the New Year birding. Varied habitats including woods, fields, and the reservoir. Probably also birding other sites for a "Big Day" in Balt City and Co. Meet 8:30 AM. Contact leader: Kevin Graff, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com or 410-557-2456 for location.

✿ **Baltimore.** First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Moved to Wed. Jan 8.

✿ **Harford.** Perryman Area. Celebrate the new year/recover from New Year's Eve by birding the always productive Perryman Area with leader Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsindmd@verizon.net. Meet at the WalMart parking lot at 8:30 AM.

✿ **Howard.** Start Your 2013 List! Half day. Plan to carpool to different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year where every bird is new! Meet 8 AM at Howard Conservancy/Mount Pleasant Farm. Expect moderate walking. Possibility of lunch stop depending on the weather. Facilities at some spots. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 443-285-3302 or bonnieott@verizon.net.

✿ **Montgomery.** Earliest Bird Walk, Georgetown Reservoir and DC Hotspots. Half day. Start the New Year right. Meet at 8 AM at Georgetown Reservoir, DC by the gate leading to the dike between the pools. Reservations required. Strict limit: 20. Leader: Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com.

Friday, January 3

✿ **CHRISTMAS COUNT. Seaford-Nanticoke, DE.** Compiler: Glen Lovelace, Glen.Lovelace@state.de.us or 302-628-3978 (h) or 302-760-2321 (w).

Saturday, January 4

✿ **CHRISTMAS COUNT. Inwood, WV.** A count centered near Martinsburg, WV. Compiler: Bob Dean, bobdean52@gmail.com.

✿ **CHRISTMAS COUNT. Rehoboth, DE.** Compiler: Sally O'Byrne, salobyne@gmail.com.

✿ **Kent.** Eastern Neck NWR. Kick off your birding year looking for waterfowl, eagles, and winter landbirds. Meet 8 AM at the Dollar General parking lot (off Philosopher's Terr) in Chestertown. If you have questions, please contact the trip leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealde@borealdee@gmail.com.

✿ **Cecil.** Eastern Neck NWR. Excellent birding in a quiet setting with no crowds or distractions. Meet 7 AM near Dunkin' Donuts

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Calendar continued from page 10

in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40/213 in Elkton. Bring lunch and snacks; there are few opportunities to purchase food in the vicinity. Dress for extreme cold and possible wind. Boots are strongly recommended. Bring spotting scope if you have one. Easy walking on level ground, about two miles round trip. Leader: Parke John, parke@del.net.

Sunday, January 5

❖ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Annapolis-Gibson Island.** Coordinators: Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513 and Hal and Lynn Wierenga, 410-647-7439.

❖ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Fort Belvoir, VA and MD.** Compiler: Kurt Gaskill, 703-768-2172 or kurtcapt87@verizon.net. MD Sector Leader: Carol Ghebelian, 301-753-6754 or ghebelian@comcast.net.

❖ CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Calmes Neck, VA.** Compiler: Margaret Wester, 540-837-2799 or margaretwester@hotmail.com. This count includes much of far-western Loudoun as well as Clarke Counties.

AUDREY CARROLL MID-WINTER COUNT. **Frederick.** Meet at the Sanctuary at 6:30 AM. You may want or need waterproof boots. Compiler: David Smith, 410-549-7082.

🏠 **Tri-County.** MD and DE Coast. Full day. Search for winter specialties and perhaps a rarity from recent CBCs. Bring a lunch. Dress for the weather. Meet 7:30 AM Ward Museum parking lot, Salisbury. Contact leader Sam Dyke, 410-603-7615 for directions and more details.

Wednesday, January 8

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "Barn Owls in Southern Maryland" by *Mike Callahan*, SMAS. 7:30 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Info: Colin Rees, reescolin@hotmail.com.

🏠 **Baltimore.** First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Thursday, January 9

MEETING. **Frederick.** Speaker: *Bob Schaefer*. Program: "The Wild North of Canada and Siberia." 7 PM at Homewood at Cruiland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info, contact Tom Humphrey, Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org or 301-696-8540.

MEETING. **Howard.** "The Osprey - Its Life and Recent Trends on the Patuxent River," by *Greg Kearns*, Park Naturalist, Patuxent River Park. From his 27 years of observing the osprey, Greg will discuss its ecology, population data, and trends. Hospitality 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Wes Earp, 410-531-3197.

Saturday, January 11

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY. **Carroll.** Once again hosted by Splinter and Sue Yingling at 70 Ridge Rd in Westminster. If you've never attended before, now's the time to start. Everyone has a good time. 7:30 PM until? For more info and to coordinate your potluck dish, contact Sue Yingling at 410-857-0902 or syingling@mac.com.

🏠 **Cecil.** Duck, Duck, Goose. A day of seeking out waterfowl at various Delmarva locations. Meet near Dunkin' Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40/213 in Elkton at 8 AM. Dress for extreme cold and wind. Bring scope if you have one. A mix of driving and some walking. Leader: Maryanne Dolan, maryanne.dolan@gmail.com.

🏠 **Howard.** Alpha Ridge Landfill. Reservations required. Carpooling is required. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. We will search for Short-eared Owls with no guarantee of finding one. Other possibilities are Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Horned Lark, American Pipit, and Eastern Meadowlark. If we finish early, we may go to Mount Pleasant and look for wintering sparrows. Facilities at Alpha Ridge Park. Limited to a maximum of five cars. Contact Joe Hanfman for reservations, auk1844@gmail.com, 410-772-8424. Leader: Ralph Cullison, roci@ci@cullison.org or 410-442-2181.

Sunday, January 12

🏠 **Anne Arundel.** Greenbury Point. This is an excellent location to observe waterbirds. We'll meet at Parole P&R (located on Harry Truman Pkwy, between Riva and South Haven Rds) at 8 AM. The trails at Greenbury Point are flat and grass or dirt covered. Scopes are encouraged. Leader: TBD. For add'l info contact Kevin Smith, ravens3077@yahoo.com.

🏠 **Baltimore.** Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for winter waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Meet 9 AM at the nature center. Leaders: Bob Rineer, 410-252-6408 or brineer@verizon.net, and Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

COVERED DISH DINNER AND LECTURE. **Baltimore.** Tonight's featured talk: "My Big Year on the Road - The People and Birds I Met" with *Ron Gutberlet*. 4:30 PM at the Vollmer Center at Cylburn. Please contact Kevin Graff in advance at keyweststyle2001@gmail.com, to let him know you are coming, and what you plan to bring.

FRED ARCHIBALD MID-WINTER COUNT. **Frederick.** Meet at the sanctuary at 6:30 AM. Dress warmly and wear waterproof boots. Contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660.

Tuesday, January 14

MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** The speaker will be *Liz McDowell* and the title will be "Native Plants for Birds and Pollinators." 7 PM at Compton Hall, Frostburg State U., Frostburg. For info contact Mary Huebner at marybrd22@gmail.com.

Wednesday, January 15

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MEETING. Montgomery. Program and speaker TBD. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info contact Anna Urciolo at urcioloa@sidwell.edu.

Thursday, January 16

MEETING. Caroline. Tonight's Program: "Bird Trivia" by *Les Coble*. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. For info contact Debby Bennett at dabennett1996@gmail.com.

Montgomery. Blue Mash. A mid-week walk to this popular site seeking winter birds: the expected cardinals, towhees, and mockingbirds as well as raptors (Northern Harrier a possibility) and sparrows. We'll check for ducks on the pond. Expect to walk (waterproof boots suggested!) about a mile on level trails. The trip will be cancelled or postponed in case of sleet, ice or rain. Start at 8 AM. Reservations not necessary. For directions or more info contact the leader: Stephanie Lovell at ctlovell1@yahoo.com or 240-242-3235.

Saturday, January 18

Anne Arundel. Thomas Point. Dan Haas will lead a trip to Thomas Point and surrounding areas. We'll meet at Thomas Point at 7 AM and Dan will lay out the route depending on current spotting trends. Leader: Dan Haas, nervousbirds@gmail.com.

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Wendy Alexander, 410-788-4080 or drbeabes@verizon.net.

MID-WINTER COUNT. Baltimore. To participate in post-migration bird count in your choice of location in Balt. City or County, call Pete Webb, 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

MID-WINTER COUNT. Carroll. Parties of counters will set their own schedules in their pre-arranged areas, to count resident and late migrant bird species throughout the County. Contact Don Jewell to verify your bird counting area (jewelldg@gmail.com or 410-259-4716). Tally Rally will be hosted by Amy Hoffman at her home. If you will be attending the Tally, please RSVP by Jan 15 to Amy at 410-549-3598 and bring a cash donation (\$5) or a food item.

Cecil. Ocean City Area and Beyond. Classic trip to a prime winter birding hotspot. Meet 6 AM near Dunkin' Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40/213 in Elkton. Prepare for a long and cold day. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Harford. Conowingo Gull/Eagle Watch. Dennis Kirkwood (410-692-5905; newarkfarms@gmail.com) leads this morning survey from Fisherman's Park just below the Conowingo Dam on the Harford Co side of the Susquehanna. Meet 8 AM to begin the search for Bald Eagles, maybe a Golden Eagle, various gulls, and waterfowl.

Saturday, January 25

Baltimore. Patterson Park. Come see what birding action abounds amid the varied habitats of this green oasis in the middle of Balt. Meet 8 AM at the White House just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of S. Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St. For questions, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center at ppaudubon@gmail.com or 410-558-2473.

MID-WINTER COUNT. Harford. Contact compiler, Rick Cheicante, 410-803-2712 or rickcheicante@cs.com to participate in this opportunity to assess bird life quantity in our area. Feeder counters are especially welcome.

Kent. Ocean City and Worcester County. Our annual search for winter specialties including gannet, sea ducks, alcids, gulls, Purple Sandpipers, and wintering songbirds. Full day. Dress warmly, bring lunch and warm beverages. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealde@gmail.com.

C&O CANAL COUNT. Allegany/Garrett, Washington, Frederick, Montgomery, and DC. DC Audubon's signature event is the C&O Canal Count, a midwinter bird survey that attempts to count all of the birds along the entire 184.5 mile length of the canal on one specific day. In 2013, participants counted 86 different species and over 11,700 individual birds. Contact canalcount@gmail.com to sign up and also get more info.

Tuesday, January 28

POT LUCK DINNER AND MEETING. Washington. Mount Aetna Nature Center. Pot Luck starts at 6 PM. Bring a dish to share along with your own drink, plate, and utensils. Meeting follows at 7 PM. Explore Sandhill Crane migration through the film *Crane Song*. Call 301-797-8454 for directions.

Saturday, February 1

Anne Arundel. Fort Smallwood/Weinberg Park. Half-day visit to a waterfront county park to look for wintering waterfowl and landbirds. Entry fee of \$6 per vehicle. We'll meet at Severna Park P&R (corner of Jones Station Rd and Ritchie Hwy) at 9 AM. Leader: Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513 or susiericc@comcast.net.

Harford. Eastern Neck NWR/Upper Shore/Kent County. Late winter is prime time to visit here. Diverse habitat provides a broad variety of species with a focus on wintering waterfowl. The leaders are Tom Congersky (410-658-4137; jnjtcon@zoominternet.net) and Randy Robertson. Meet at the commuter lot on Rte 155 at the intersection with I-95 near Havre de Grace at 7:30 AM.

MID-WINTER COUNT. Howard. Compilers: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@gmail.com or 410-772-8424 and Joe Byrnes, LBRoller@verizon.net.

Sunday, February 2

MID-WINTER COUNT. Frederick. Contact David Smith, 410-549-7082 for more info. Tally Rally afterwards at the Smith's.

Montgomery. Winter Waterfowl on the Potomac. Meet 8

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AM in the Swain's Lock parking lot at the end of Swain's Lock Rd. Bring a scope if you have one. Trip will be canceled if icy conditions along the canal towpath make walking treacherous. Reservations required. For reservations and more info, contact Andy Martin, martinap2@verizon.net or 301-529-2066 (cell).

Wednesday, February 5

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "The Wonderful World of Whoopers" by *Ken Lavish*, Volunteer and Environmental Educator. 7:30 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Info: Colin Rees, reescolin@hotmail.com.

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. Carroll. "Revision to Maryland's Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species List" by *Jim McCann*. 7:30 PM at the South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg. Contact Dave Harvey at 410-795-3117 for more info.

Thursday, February 6

MEETING. Frederick. Members' Night. This will feature a variety of short presentations of photos, slides, and/or videos from our members. Who knows where it may take us! Please let Tom Humphrey (Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org or 301-696-8540) know in advance if you want to be on the agenda.

Saturday, February 8

MID-WINTER COUNT. Anne Arundel. Take the day off from your usual chores and spend the day at your favorite birding spot hunting down and counting all the birds you can find. Contact Kevin Smith for details at ravens3077@yahoo.com.

Baltimore. Waterfowl and Rare Birds Roundup. We'll be checking out several sites in search of ducks, geese, and possible swans. Any recently reported rare birds will be fair game. Bring your scope if you have one. Meet 8 AM at Cromwell Bridge Rd P&R (I-695 exit 29-A). Leader: Kevin Graff, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com.

Cecil. Fair Hill NMRA. Half day. Fair Hill is one of Cecil Co's loveliest birding spots. A variety of habitats, including woods, fields, and wetlands, means that we will see a number of different wintering species. Dress for extreme cold and wind. If we have a thaw it may be muddy, so boots are recommended. Meet 8 AM at Foxcatcher Farm Covered Bridge parking lot, near the Fair Hill Nature Center on Tawes Dr. Parking fee required, \$3 MD residents; \$4 out-of-state visitors [bring small bills for honor box]). Leader: Rich Donham, rdonham8@gmail.com.

Harford. Bradenbaugh Flats. Enjoy a tour through NW Harford Co's agricultural area to find wintering fieldbirds and waterfowl. Expect Horned Larks, Ring-necked Ducks, with possible Cackling Goose, longspurs, and Snow Buntings. Meet at Jarrettsville ES at 8 AM. The trip ends at the leader's house

with hot soup. Contact Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com for further info.

Sunday, February 9

Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for winter waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Meet 9 AM at the nature center. Leaders: Bob Rineer, 410-252-6408 or brineer@verizon.net, and Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

MID-WINTER COUNT. Kent. Full day. Join the field crew or count in your neighborhood, anywhere in Kent Co. Contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealdee@gmail.com for more info.

Montgomery. Oaks Landfill, Laytonsville. Bundle up to explore this now-closed landfill adjacent to the Blue Mash Nature Trail. Should be mostly open terrain with some ponds. Possible wintering sparrows, raptors, and waterfowl. Leader will have scope for distant birds. We have special permission to enter this "closed to the public" landfill so reservations are essential. Limit 16. Meet at 8 AM. Contact leader for reservations and more information. Leader: Mark England, 240-207-3132 (h) or 240-375-4500 (m).

Tuesday, February 11

MEETING. Allegany/Garrett. The speaker will be *Dr. Frank Ammer* and the title will be "Avian Associations With Mined Habitats." 7 PM at Compton Hall, Frostburg State U., Frostburg. For info contact Mary Huebner at marybrd22@gmail.com.

Thursday, February 13

MEETING. Howard. "Birding Highlights of the Galapagos Islands," by *Kevin Heffernan and Karen Darcy*. The talk will describe the natural history of the islands and some of the unique flora and fauna there. Included are Darwin's Finches, Galapagos Penguins, Flightless Cormorants, flamingos, Waved Albatrosses, and Short-eared Owls. Hospitality 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Wes Earp, 410-531-3197.

Friday to Monday, February 14 to 17

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT. Anyone can take part, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes on one or more days and reporting the sightings online at www.birdsource.org/gbbc/.

Washington. Bombay Hook to Blackwater NWR with Sandy Sagalkin. Call Sandy at 240-291-6465 for all trip details and to register.

Saturday, February 15

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Ben Poscover, 410-882-1309.

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H Howard. How to Find an Owl. Meet 1 PM (possibility of birding till dusk) at the Annapolis Rock Rd horse trailer parking lot, midway between Hipsley Mill Rd and Rte 94. Learn how to find owls by habitat and signs. Jay is an expert at finding owls and will share his skills and knowledge as to how to find different species. Contact Jay to sign up so participants can be advised of weather related changes. Our target species are Long-eared, Saw-whet, and other owls. No facilities. Leader: Jay Sheppard, JMSheppar@aol.com (preferred) or 301-725-5559.

Y MOS. Youth Winter Bird Count. Dorchester County. Beginning to Advanced. 8 AM to 5:30 PM. The group will meet 8 AM at Sailwinds Center immediately across the Choptank River Bridge in Cambridge. We'll spend time looking at the large array of ducks, before heading south to Blackwater Refuge and Shorter's Wharf to look for Short-eared Owl and the Rough-legged Hawk. Bring a lunch and money for dinner and plenty of warm clothing. Contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com for more info and to make a reservation.

Saturday to Monday, February 15 to 17

H Carroll. Carroll County Winter Weekend at the Beach. Visit great bird spots such as Bombay Hook, Indian River and Ocean City Inlets, and West Ocean City Pond for waterfowl and other winter residents. Meet at the Bombay Hook Visitor's Center at 10 AM on Sat. RSVP to leader, Bob Ringler at 410-303-2792 if you plan to attend. Contact Bill Ellis, 443-520-8809 to inquire about sleeping space at his townhouse in Ocean City on Sat and Sun nights.

Sunday, February 16

H Harford. Loch Raven Reservoir. Explore the beautiful surroundings of Baltimore's premier watershed for wintering migrant songbirds, waterbirds, and raptors. Meet at the MD 147/152 P&R near Fallston at 7:30 AM. Co-leaders: Dave Larkin, 410-569-8319 or dlarkin@towson.edu and Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net.

Wednesday, February 19

MEETING. **Montgomery.** Program and speaker TBD. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info contact Anna Urciolo at urcioloa@sidwell.edu.

Thursday, February 20

MEETING. **Caroline.** Movie Night. Title TBD. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. For info contact Debby Bennett at dabennett1996@gmail.com.

Saturday, February 22

H Baltimore. Patterson Park. Come see what birding action abounds amid the varied habitats of this green oasis in the middle of Balt. Meet 8 AM at the White House just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of S. Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St. For questions, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center at ppaudubon@gmail.com or 410-558-2473.

H Frederick. Black Hills Reservoir. Search for wintering

waterfowl. Contact leader: Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 for meet time and location.

H Harford. DE Coast/Ocean City. Meet at the commuter lot on Rte 155 at the intersection with I-95 near Havre de Grace at 6:30 AM. This trip will visit several hotspots along the DE Bay for wintering specialties and conclude in MD at Ocean City. Contact leader: Russ Kovach at russell.kovach@gmail.com or 443-386-4748 for more info.

Tuesday, February 25

MEETING. **Washington.** Mark Abdy will present "Botswana Highlights" from his most recent trip. Call 301-797-8454 for further info. 7 PM at the Mount Aetna Nature Center.

Saturday, March 1

H Frederick. Woodcock Excursion. Location TBD. Contact leader, David Smith at 410-549-7082 for meet location and time.

H Howard. Winter Sparrow Search. Explore wetlands and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities! Limit: 12. Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots. Contact Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net or 443-285-3302 to sign up and get meet time.

H Kent. Blackwater NWR, Dorchester County. Prime waterfowl and eagle country; pelicans and other surprises. Full day, bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot (off Philosopher's Terr) in Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealdee@gmail.com.

BOARD MEETING. **MOS.** 10 AM. Hosted by the Talbot Bird Club at The Wye Research Education Center (124 Wye Narrows Dr, Queenstown). Contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary at janetbill@prodigy.net for additional info.

Y MOS. Deadline to commit to MD youth World Series of Birding team. Contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com if interested. Needed: Middle and High School Students loving birds and nature. Experience not needed.

Sunday, March 2

H Howard. Centennial Park. Meet 8 AM West end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl and lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. Leader: Allen Lewis, allenlewis@gmail.com.

Tuesday, March 4

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Tonight: Speaker and topic TBA. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. Info: Pete Webb, 443-904-6314 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks Until Dusk. Joint MBC/ANS trips. Meet at the end of Seneca Rd at Riley's

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Lock "on the bridge" at 5 PM. After checking out the river we will proceed to Hughes Hollow. Highlights here will include waterfowl flying into roost. We will try for displaying woodcock if they are in the vicinity. Bring scope, flashlight, and wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Reservations not required. For more info call Jim Green at 301-742-0036 (m) or jkgbirdman53@gmail.com.

Wednesday, March 5

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** "Geocaching" by *Alan and Penny McQuarrie*. 7:30 PM at the South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg. Contact Dave Harvey at 410-795-3117 for more info.

Thursday, March 6

MEETING. **Frederick.** Speaker: *Andy Martin*. Program: "Listening to and Recording Night Flight Calls - What's It All About?" 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info, contact Tom Humphrey, Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org or 301-696-8540.

Harford. Timberdoodle Search. Evening watch for one of our most interesting (and elusive!) birds, the American Woodcock, as it performs its mating dance. Meet 6:15 PM at the at the Sweet Air section of Gunpowder SP. Take Greene Rd, either SW from Rte 165 or NE from Rte 145 to Moores Rd, then SW on Dalton-Bevard Rd into the park. Leaders: Mark Johnson, 410-692-5978 or mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil and Joyce Browning, 443-966-0249 or jbrowni3@umd.edu.

Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks Until Dusk. See Mar 4 listing. For more info call Jim Green at 301-742-0036 (m) or jkgbirdman53@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 8

Allegany/Garrett. Rocky Gap SP, Mason Road Pond, and the C&O Canal Terminus Area for waterfowl. Leaders: Ray Kiddy and Mary Huebner. Meet 9 AM at Western MD Train Station parking lot. Contact Ray (rrkiddy@atlanticbb.net) or Mary (marybrd22@gmail.com) for more info.

Baltimore. Middle Creek WMA. All-day trip (bring lunch) to visit this major gathering place north of Lancaster, PA for Snow Geese and other waterfowl. There is also an excellent display of mounted birds at the Visitor Center. Note: Trip may go elsewhere if Middle Creek is frozen over. Meet 8 AM at Timonium P&R on Greenspring Dr/Deereco Rd off Timonium Rd just east of I-83. Leader: Pete Webb, 443-904-6314 or pete_webb@juno.com. Contact leader to learn if trip is on or off, due to ice on lake or weather conditions.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH. **Cecil.** Cabin Fever. This family-friendly community outreach event will take place between 11 AM and

2 PM. We'll have supplies for children to make peanut butter and pine cone bird feeders. Location: Moore's Chapel United Methodist Church, 392 Blake Rd, Elkton. For more info, contact Pat Valdata, pvaldata1@gmail.com.

Howard. Waterfowl Search. Meet at Broken Land Pkwy/Rte 32 P&R (West side) at 8 AM. We'll carpool to search the Howard Co waterways for ducks, grebes, mergansers, and loons. Chance of an early migrant. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643 or krschwa1@verizon.net.

Montgomery. Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay NA, PG Co. Half day. Joint trip with ANS. Waterfowl, Wilson's Snipe, winter and early spring songbirds, Ospreys displaying. Meet 8 AM at parking lot by park hdqtrs. Wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Reservations required. Limit: 15. Call the leader: John Bjerke at 240-401-1643.

Sunday, March 9

Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for winter waterfowl, raptors, passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Meet 9 AM at the nature center. Leaders: Bob Rineer, 410-252-6408 or brineer@verizon.net, and Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

Harford. Swan Harbor Farm Park. This Harford Co gem with three impoundments, a commanding view of the Bay, wooded trails, and open fields has developed into a fine location for a broad spectrum of bird life, including waterfowl, marsh specialties, raptors, and sparrows. Meet at 8 AM (be careful to set your clocks for daylight savings time) at the parking lot adjacent to the Agricultural Education Center (near end of driveway). Leaders are Josh Emm, 410-937-6790 or apistopanchax@gmail.com and Tom Gibson, 410-734-4135 or gibsonlld@aol.com.

Howard. Centennial Park. See Mar 2 listing. Centennial Park. Leaders: Richard and Renee Peters, Richard@rrrrrpeters.org.

YMOS Birdathon - March 15-16 2014

The Birdathon is the principal YMOS fund raiser to support youth birder participation in the World Series of Birding (WSB) at Cape May, NJ, in May and for scholarships to attend the Resident Summer Workshop at Washington College in June. You can help by pledging \$0.25, \$0.50, or \$1.00 per species seen on the Eastern Shore over this 2-day event. The youngsters raised \$2,000 last year. As a result, four teams represented the MOS in the WSB Youth Division -- the Elementary and one of two Middle School teams won in their respective categories! You can pledge any time prior to the Birdathon by emailing George Radcliffe (radclifg@gmail.com) or Wayne Bell (wbell2@washcoll.edu). Thanks in advance for your interest and support.

--Wayne Bell.

POSTMASTER: TIME-DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE!

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*Anyone is welcome to contribute articles, photos,
or ideas that would be of interest to other birders.
Copy may be e-mailed to Richard Donham by
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